



# SPEECH

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## **Farewell Speech During Chief of Defence Force's Change of Command Parade**

18 Aug 2015

Minister,

2nd Minister,

MOS,

PSes,

Service Chiefs,

**N** Distinguished Guests,

Men and Women of the SAF.

A very good afternoon.

Perry and I would like to first thank you for taking time to attend this parade.

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Your presence means a lot to the both of us. I would also like to thank all of you in the organising committee for making this possible and most importantly, for all the soldiers on parade, thank you. I know it has been a very busy year for the SAF. Your fine bearing and discipline clearly demonstrate the pride and professionalism of the SAF.

## OUR SAF, OUR PEOPLE

Our Singapore celebrated its Golden Jubilee nine days ago. If we looked back fifty years ago, we would see a Singapore that was still reeling from the shock of separation. With poor infrastructure, no natural resources and a high level of unemployment, our forefathers were faced with much uncertainty. At the same time, our external and internal security was tenuous, amidst the tumultuous political developments in our region at that point in time.

After proclaiming that Singapore shall forever be a sovereign, democratic and independent nation, founded upon the principles of liberty, justice and equality, our founding generation of leaders began the daunting task of nation building.



And one of the most pressing and urgent tasks was to build a defence force from scratch.

It was no easy feat. We had neither the experience nor expertise to raise a national service force. Our forefathers were mainly of migrant descent that typically steered away from soldiering. But whatever we lacked, we made up with steely resolve and a willingness to make tough decisions. Through the decades, we were fortunate to receive strong political support and a steady investment of resources and talent to build up the SAF, piece by piece, brick by brick.

Today, the SAF is in a position of strength. From our formative years of two infantry Battalions, two wooden ships and no air force to speak of, we have transformed into a highly capable and integrated fighting force, capable of conducting a full spectrum of operations.

Today, I am confident that the SAF will deliver whenever we are called into action. Our track record speaks for itself. From operations in far flung places like Afghanistan and the Gulf of Aden; to providing assistance in humanitarian disasters in our region; to safeguarding our skies, land and seas 24/7, the SAF has delivered.

I am confident because the SAF continues to be a forward looking organisation. We have invested steadily over the decades to bring in advanced capabilities. What you have witnessed during the aerial displays and mobile columns of NDP 15 was but a fraction of our true capabilities. More than a tank, a fighter jet or a ship, we have built up a robust command and control network to connect our fighting systems, and this is supported by a strong logistics and engineering backbone, so that we can fight effectively as ONE SAF.

But ultimately if you were to ask me what gives me the utmost confidence, I would simply say – You. It's all of you, the NSFs amongst us; the Regulars; the NSmen; you are always serving with pride and unwavering commitment. You are highly capable, driven and anchored on strong values. I have seen you all consistently go beyond the call of duty in service to our beloved nation. To all of you, my comrades in the SAF - You are the main source of my confidence, the strength of our SAF.

## APPRECIATION

At this last leg of my tour, allow me to thank the people who have supported me during my CDF tour.

First, I would like to thank the MINDEF leadership - Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen, 2nd Ministers Chan Chun Sing and Lui Tuck Yew, MOS Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman - for entrusting the SAF to my care and empowering me to do what I felt was right for the SAF.

And in truth, the SAF owes much of our success and development to the foresight of our political leadership. Their clear guidance, steadfast backing and strong endorsement have allowed us to take a long-term approach to our planning and endeavours.

To the PSes - Chie Foo, Yeng Kit and Chee Khern - and the rest of the MINDEF colleagues. Thank you for the consistent support and for strengthening the MINDEF/SAF interface.

To my Service Chiefs - Ravinder, Perry, Cher Mou, Chee Peng, Chung Han and most recently, Melvyn - thank you for maintaining our services at the highest level of operational readiness now and for the far future ahead.

To my Chiefs of Staff - Mark and Choon Hoong - thank you for always "checking my 6" and for guiding the Joint Staff to deliver at the highest level.



To my JSC members - from J1 to J7, FSTA, Dir NSD, Dir SSRD, CMC, Services' Chiefs of Staffs and the respective Group Heads - thank you for your support. I could always count on your wise counsel and your candid feedback.



To my Sergeant Majors, Command Chiefs and Master Chief - JoeKoa, Peck Oon, Siak Ping, Andrew, Mike Pathi and Peng Sim - thank you for upholding the professional standards and developing our WOSpec and MEs as well-rounded warfighters, trainers and leaders.

To Jasline and the rest of my office staff - Siew Lai, Chiew Hua and Judy, and my two trusted MAs - Tiong Keat and Lead Shuan - thank you for being such valuable assistants to me in my work.

To our DSTA and DSO partners - thank you for doing all that is possible to support and strengthen the SAF, making sure that we always have the technological edge to stay ahead of the challenges.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my wife, Michelle, and my two daughters, Sara and Elisabeth, for being my pillars of strength. Your unconditional love and support have given me the strength to face the challenges head on.

#### THE NEW CHIEF: MG PERRY LIM

As I retire from the SAF today, it is with great confidence that I hand over the SAF to Major-General Perry Lim. Perry is familiar to all of us, having served various command and staff appointments, from Comd 7 SIB, HJPT, Comd 3 Div, COS-GS and most recently COA. He is a distinguished General and has proven himself to be very capable and effective. More importantly, he has the right heart for the men and women of our Armed Forces.

Perry, I look forward to seeing you bring our SAF to greater heights and I wish you the very best for your watch as our CDF.

#### CONCLUSION

The SAF is a key institution of Singapore. For the past 50 years, the SAF has brought peace and security to Singapore and Singaporeans. I am confident that you will continue to keep our SAF strong and forward looking. Your SAF stories will inspire our future generations to defend our home and loved ones, even as we build

towards SG100.

I am truly humbled and grateful to have served alongside the men and women of the SAF for these past 29 years. I am extremely proud to have called all of you my brothers and sisters in arms. Come tomorrow, I will depend on you to protect Singapore and my family, my home.

Above all, do your utmost to keep the SAF strong and always Yang Pertama Dan Utama! First and Foremost.

Thank you.

**News Release:**

- New Chief of Defence Force for the SAF (MINDEF\_20150818001.pdf)

National Archives of Singapore